

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

Louisiana Office of Public Health Laboratory Services (LA SPHL) (504) 568-5371 or (504) 568-8102, 24 Hour Pager (504) 374-6669 or (877) 309-2867

**Louisiana Office of Public Health Infectious Disease Epidemiology
(800) 256-2748 (24 hours)**

Contact the Louisiana State Public Health Laboratory (LA SPHL) to obtain specific instructions prior to collecting any samples.

Remember that these samples may be highly infectious! Extreme caution should be taken in collecting, preparing for shipment and transporting any material suspected of being contaminated with a biological agent.

Specimen collection and transport

Clinical:

Suitable specimens for Antibody Detection include blood, plasma or serum.

Suitable specimens for Antigen Detection by molecular biology assay include nasopharyngeal wash or aspirate, bronchoalveolar lavage, tracheal washing, pleural tap, blood components such as white blood cells or whole uncoagulated blood, formalin fixed or paraffin embedded tissues from all major organs, frozen tissues of lungs and upper airways, urine (cell pellet from 50 ml of first void morning specimen, then resuspend in 2 to 3 ml of viral transport medium), or stool.

All non-tissue samples should be shipped using cold packs. Store and ship fixed tissue specimens at room temperature. Frozen tissues should be shipped at or below –20 C with dry ice.

For a detailed protocol on how to collect specimens, contact the LA SPHL.

Testing available:

Total Antibody (IgA, IgM and IgG) assay and PCR for detection of SARS Coronavirus RNA

IMPORTANT NOTE: Submitting a follow up specimen is recommended if you suspect your patient has this disease. Both total antibody and

molecular biology assays are, at this time, not sufficiently accurate for specific diagnosis of SARS. Any presumptive positive specimen will be forwarded to CDC.

SARS can spread person to person by droplets or aerosol expelled from the oropharynx of infected person. Contaminated clothing or bed linens can also spread the virus.

Reporting:

All reporting times are the minimum time. Any individual specimen may take longer.

Prior approval for both of these assays by the **LA Office of Public Health State Epidemiologist (800) 256-2748** is necessary.

The *SARS* antibody assay is an overnight assay. It will be reported approximately 24 hours after the clinical specimen is received at the SPHL.

Molecular biology assays will be reported 8 hours after specimen is received in the laboratory. Some of the specimens will be sent to CDC for confirmation which will increase reporting time.